

Claims 1-5 have been amended and are believed allowable for the reasons set forth hereinafter.

Briefly, the invention relates to an improved latch mechanism for a sliding drawer. The latch mechanism incorporates a pivotal handle mounted on the front edge of the drawer. The pivotal handle includes catch members projecting rearwardly into the cabinet. The catch members are adapted to engage a strike incorporated with the cabinet to hold the cabinet drawer closed. The catch members are typically provided on opposite sides of the drawer so that the catch members will preclude lateral or side to side movement of the handle and also serve to hold the drawer in a closed position except when the handle is pivoted about the front edge of the drawer.

Claim 1 was rejected on the combination of Sevey, U.S. Patent No. 4,681,381 taken with Price, U.S. Patent No. 5,630,630. The Examiner described Price as depicting a plate 38 biased by a spring 60 and moveable in response to actuation by a separate handle 16.

It is noted that the Price reference does not depict a handle member which includes a plate that fits over the top edge of the drawer. This feature is incorporated in all of the independent claims currently pending. Likewise, the Sevey reference does not include such a pivotal handle member. Rather, Sevey includes a pull handle 14 in the figures. Incorporating the latch mechanism of the Price reference with the Sevey reference would merely provide that a handle 16 with a separate latch 38 projecting through an opening 107 would engage against the underside of the top crossbar of the cabinet. There is no plate on the top edge of a drawer, such as a plate 52, in the present application which fits over the top edge 46 of the drawer and pivots over that top edge to release a latch mechanism or to provide for engagement of a latch

mechanism when biased by a spring 66.

The prior art depicts a latch which fits through an opening in the drawer or glove box panel, rather than providing a pivotal plate on the top edge of a drawer.

Thus, applicant believes that the structure, as well as the function and operation of the presently claimed subject matter, is clearly distinct from the combination of references urged by the Examiner. In view of these distinct differences, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejection and passage of independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-7.

It is noted that claims 8 and 13, which are also independent, include the limitation directed to the positioning of a plate on the top edge of a drawer, as well as the further limitations of claims 3 and 5, respectively. Thus, claim 8 is directed to the combination of the handle construction wherein one of the slide sections comprises a strike for cooperative engagement with the catch member. Claim 13 incorporates the handle and plate construction in combination with catch members which are positioned on opposite sides of the drawer so as to prevent lateral or side to side movement.

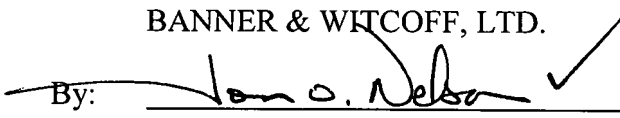
In view of the foregoing, therefore, it is believed that the claims in their amended condition are allowable. Reconsideration and passage to allowance is earnestly solicited.

Attached hereto is a marked up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version With Markings to Show Changes Made".

Respectfully submitted,

BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.

Date: December 7, 2001

By: 
Jon O. Nelson
Reg. No. 24,566

BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.
Ten South Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 715-1000

Attorney Docket No. 10968.86881

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. A latch mechanism for a sliding drawer supported by telescoping slides and mounted in a cabinet with a cabinet wall and front opening [and supported by telescoping slides], said drawer including a front side wall with a top edge and lateral side walls, said telescoping slides attached to the lateral side walls of the drawer for support and movement of the drawer into and out of the cabinet, said latch mechanism comprising in combination:

a drawer handle mounted on the front side wall of the drawer, said drawer handle including a plate [riding] positioned on the top edge of the drawer, said plate [and] pivotal [about] on the top edge between a first drawer retention position and a second drawer release position;

said plate projecting into the drawer from the front edge and including a catch member attached to the plate [inside the drawer], said catch member including a catch tab projecting generally transverse to the direction of drawer slide movement;

means for biasing said plate and catch member about the front edge toward the first position; and

a strike mounted on the inside of the cabinet at the front opening adjacent the drawer top edge when the drawer is closed, said strike positioned for engagement by the biased catch member when in the first position, and disengaged therefrom when the [handle] plate is manually pivoted about the top edge to the second position by moving the handle against the force of the means for biasing.

Claim 2 has been amended as follows:

2. The mechanism of claim 1 [including a] wherein said strike is attached to the telescoping slide.

Claim 3 has been amended as follows:

3. The mechanism of claim 1 including first and second catch members attached to the handle adjacent respectively the lateral [sideswallls] side walls of the drawer, said first and second catch members positioned on the inside of the drawer to retain the handle from lateral sliding movement.

Claim 4 has been amended as follows:

4. The mechanism of claim 1 wherein the handle includes a depending run extending from the plate on the inside of the drawer, said depending run hingedly connected to the front side wall of the drawer.

Claim 5 has been amended as follows:

5. The latch mechanism of claim 1 wherein said slides comprise a first wall attachment section and at least one telescoping section, said telescoping section being attached to the lateral side wall[s] of the drawer, said first wall attachment section including said strike [projecting therefrom].

Please add new claims 8-18.